



THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST

MAY 2016

BHCA and AHC Celebrate the Legacy of African American Artists

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 1—June 30

The Great War: Arkansas in World War I Exhibit
Arkansas Post Museum State Park

June 4

Black History Commission of Arkansas/AHC
African American Arts in Arkansas
Mosaic Templars Cultural Center

June 11

Black History Commission of Arkansas
Curtis H. Sykes Grant Workshop
AHC Conference Room

June 14-23

Fought in Ernest: Civil War Arkansas
Fairfield Bay Community Education Center

The Black History Commission of Arkansas and the Arkansas History Commission will be hosting a symposium on Saturday, June 4, at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The symposium's theme, "African American Arts in Arkansas," will feature speakers Delita Martin, Garbo Hearne, Garland Martin Taylor, and Jeff Lewellen.

Delita Martin creates her art at the Black Box Studio. Martin's techniques combine several artistic media to create what she terms a "visual language." Much of her artwork can be viewed on her [website](#). Her talk, entitled, "In Search of Self: Preserving Culture through African American Art," will examine the notion of artists using imagery as a visual language to define and communicate ideas about self and culture.

Since 1988, Garbo Hearne has operated Hearne Fine Art in Little Rock, an art gallery and book store emphasizing and promoting art created by African Americans. Above all, the gallery emphasizes the power of art "to be healing, motivating, thought provoking, and meaningful to all those who come into contact with the product of a creative process." Current exhibitions at the gallery feature a wide variety of artistic expression, from an exploration of contemporary folk art to modern art masterworks. She will be exploring African American writers in her talk, "Literary Arts and



The Women Gathered by Delita Martin

African American Authors in Arkansas."

Chicago-based sculptor Garland Martin Taylor will discuss the career of one of Arkansas's overlooked African American artists, Henry Jackson Lewis. His program entitled, "Talking Palette, Hidden Artist: The Art of Arkansas's Henry Jackson Lewis," will explore the life and legacy of one of the first African American political cartoonists. Taylor was awarded a Curtis Sykes Memorial grant from the Black History Commission of Arkansas to study Lewis's career.

AHC Archivist Jeff Lewellen will be presenting, "The Soul of Arkansas," an exploration of the legacy of African American musicians in Arkansas. He will discuss familiar personalities, such as Sister Rosetta Tharp, Al Green, and Louis Jordan, as well as some of music's unsung heroes. Lewellen has spent much of the last several years researching the story of Arkansas's musical past. He has been an avid music fan for years, and began collecting music when he was twelve years old. These days, Lewellen is able to tie his love of music to his profession.

The seminar is free to attend but registration is required. The deadline for registering is Monday, May 30. Registration is limited, so be sure to make reservations soon. Check-in will begin at 9:15 a.m. on June 4. Teachers can earn up to four professional development hours through attendance. Lunch will be provided. To register, contact Tatyana Oyinloye at 501-682-6892 or email her at tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov.

African American Arts in Arkansas

Presented by the Black History Commission of Arkansas and the Arkansas History Commission

World War I Traveling Exhibit Available at AHC



The Great War: Arkansas in World War I showcases images from the AHC's holdings, including original documents, photographs, posters, maps and historical objects that tell the story of Arkansas's role during World War I, at home and on the battlefields. The panels cover the chronology of the war as well as various facets of the conflict: training troops in Arkansas, actions overseas, the home front, providing for the war, healthcare and Arkansas heroes. This exhibit consists of 12 banner stands.

Since the exhibit debuted in August 2015, it has been in constant circulation around the state. The exhibit is already booked for most of 2016, and the demand is expected to increase as we near the centennial of the entry of the US into the war.

Curator Julienne Crawford, who designed the exhibit, explains, "We've had a wonderful response from the museums, libraries, historical societies, colleges, schools and communities throughout the state that hosted the exhibit since it debuted. From high school students in Herman Davis' hometown of Manila to college students at OBU to retirees in Fairfield Bay, Arkansans throughout the state have already learned about the interesting facets of World War I presented in this exhibit. Our traveling exhibits are a wonderful way to bring the educational resources of the Arkansas History Commission to Arkansans in their hometowns." For information on scheduling the exhibit at your museum or event, contact the AHC at 501-682-6900 or email state.archives@arkansas.gov.

Black History Commission News



Curtis H. Sykes, 1930-2007

In the past few months we have featured past recipients of Curtis Sykes Memorial grants. Many of our readers may be inspired to apply for grants, but consider the grant application process daunting. With that in mind, the BHCA will hold a free workshop on June 11. The workshop will provide attendees with an overview of the grant writing process, the guidelines for applying for a Sykes grant, and an overview of past recipients. The BHCA has been proud of the many interesting and worthy projects funded by the program through the years.

The grant is named after Curtis H. Sykes, long-time chair and charter member of the Black History Commission of Arkansas. Sykes was an educator, civic leader, and tireless advocate for African American history in Arkansas.

While it is certainly possible to apply for the grant without attending the workshop, attendance is beneficial and highly recommended. Tatyana Oyinloye, African American History Program Coordinator, says of the grant workshop, "The workshops allow everyone to see the grant process from beginning to end, which is especially helpful to new applicants or applicants who have not applied since the guidelines were revised. This will allow everyone to submit grant applications with the confidence that they have dotted every i and crossed every t."

All workshops are held at the AHC at One Capitol Mall, and registration is required in advance. To register for the grant workshop, please contact Tatyana Oyinloye at 501-682-6892 or email her at tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov.

KNOW YOUR COMMISSIONERS

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HOURS: 8 AM-4:30 PM, MON-SAT
CLOSED STATE HOLIDAYS

From the Director



During the recent special session, the Arkansas General Assembly passed legislation moving the Arkansas History Commission to the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The legislation also formally changes our name to the Arkansas State Archives. Many of you have asked what this means for our agency. Hopefully, you've seen the [press release](#) issued by the Department of Arkansas Heritage, which may answer questions you have. As State Historian and director of the Arkansas State Archives, I want to assure our patrons, donors, and supporters that our mission of collecting and preserving Arkansas history has not changed.

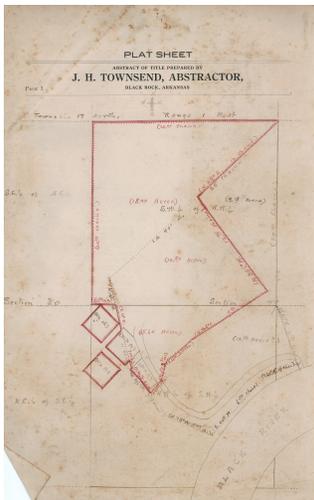
Renaming the agency to reflect its mission as the state's official archives is a significant, positive milestone for us. "Arkansas State Archives" clearly identifies our function as the repository for official state government records, which is helpful as we move forward with the state records preservation initiative mandated by Governor Hutchinson's February 2016 memorandum to state offices, agencies and departments. At the same time, our mission of "collecting and preserving Arkansas history from earliest times to the present" continues. The heart of the agency is our vast 111 year-old collection of Arkansas manuscripts, photographs, newspapers, maps, printed histories, artifacts and media. The preservation of these invaluable Arkansas history resources is our primary consideration. My staff and I take our roles as stewards of Arkansas history very seriously, and we value the trust of our donors.

The Arkansas State Archives, like all other state repositories, is committed to open access to materials in its possession. Records and collections continue to be governed by transfer and donor agreements. Protocols for accessing collections and using our research rooms at Little Rock, Powhatan, and Washington are the same. Our commitment to serving the needs of researchers who can't visit in person also has not changed. In fact, we've recently received additional resources to help us more effectively serve remote researchers. Earlier this month, we acquired Preservica, an electronic records management program, which will allow us to move forward with records preservation in the digital age. Earlier this month, we also received funding from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council (ANCRC) to add a large format scanner to our digitization equipment, which will allow us to significantly expand the holdings of the [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](#).

In all our endeavors, we will continue to call on the considerable knowledge and expertise of our two commissions, the Arkansas History Commission and the Black History Commission of Arkansas. I'm excited to be a part of this transition, and looking forward to seeing the Arkansas State Archives grow and develop within the Department of Arkansas Heritage. I'm also heartened to know how much recognition there is for the important role that archives play in preserving our history as Arkansans. This is YOUR state archives. Thank you for supporting it!

— Lisa K. Speer, State Historian

News from NEARA



The Townsend Law Firm and Abstracting Company operated in Black Rock, Arkansas, for several decades. It was started by James H. Townsend in the 1920s then continued under his son Percy's leadership until the 1980s. NEARA was fortunate to receive the business records from the Townsend Law Firm and is now making them available to researchers.

Among the records are numerous abstracts for plots of land around Lawrence County. James and Percy Townsend primarily performed abstracting services and these were often in connection to property disputes. The abstracts trace the ownership of the land back to the original owner, which for

most of Arkansas was the federal government.

Abstracting aside, James and Percy also represented people in debt cases and gave legal advice on various matters although both rarely went to trial. In one letter, Percy politely referred a complicated and heated divorce case to another local lawyer who had more trial experience!

Researchers can discover a wealth of information related to property owners, land disputes, and community relationships in the Townsend collection (MSNE.0045). Visit NEARA this summer to delve into this collection and others! Please contact NEARA directly for more information northeast.archives@arkansas.gov or 870-878-6521.

News from SARA



SARA recently received a collection of over 2,000 volumes of genealogy and history reference books donated by the Hempstead County Public Library. Researchers will find a treasure trove of materials related not only to Hempstead County, but also to the

rest of SARA's twelve-county area. In addition many Arkansas counties outside of SARA's area are covered. Compiled family histories make up about one-fifth of the collection and include such titles as *Genealogies of Virginia Families* and *Pedigrees of Some of the Emperor Charlemagne's Descendants*, along with a twenty-three volume set of *Historical Southern Families*. For those unable to travel to the East Coast, researchers will find many books on the original thirteen states as well as Arkansas's near neighbors, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Military researchers will be interested in titles on the Civil War and the War of 1812. Native American and African American history is included with works on Cherokee History and the *Slave Narratives of Arkansas*. Additionally political and general history of Arkansas is well-represented. Once cataloging is completed, titles will be searchable [online](#). The collection will add tremendously to the rich store of research materials already available to SARA's patrons.



Historians have long treasured diaries. They not only provide a snapshot of history but also give an insight into the average daily lives of people who otherwise might not leave a mark on history. This month, the AHC highlights one of these diaries. Sarah Adamson Stillwell Huffman was born in Little Rock in 1863 and moved to Arkansas County after her father died.

When Sarah, or Sallie as she was known, was twenty-eight years old, she began keeping a diary. Her diary records the life of a young woman living at the turn of the century. She recounts her time working on the farm, milking cows, sewing, and other domestic activities. She recounts her favorite books, including a novel called *Try Again*, which featured a main character with which she seemed to be rather smitten. Sallie wrote, "I wish all boys would read it & let Harry West be their moddle [sic], he is a splendid boy." In February 1892, she met Abner Huffman (whom she refers to in her diary as "Mr. Huffman"). Soon after meeting, it seems that Sallie lost interest in her diary and stopped making entries. They married later that year.

Along with the diary, Sallie left a rather elaborately decorated scrap book. The book contains poems, advertisements, and art work that Sallie deemed worthy of clipping and saving. Researchers interested in the history of commercial art may find the scrapbook fascinating.

**April
Donations and Accessions**

AHC

Yell County Civil and Criminal Court records, 0.50 cu ft
Cleburne County real estate tax ledgers — digital copies
Lower White River State Park, maps
John S. Polk papers accretion, 4 cu ft
Auditor's Journal of Letters, 0.75 cu ft
Interdepartmental Relations Committee records, 6 cu ft

SARA

Hempstead County Court records, 0.25 cu ft
Dingler Family photograph
Black Tie White Tie DVD documentary that chronicles Gibson family from Nevada County, Arkansas, and Union Parish, Louisiana

We always receive more material than we are able to list in our newsletter. For a full listing, see our blog

<http://arkansasstatearchives.blogspot.com/2016/04/acquisitions-and-accessions-for-april-49.html>

In the next couple of years, the AHC will be involved in commemorating World War I. Last year we launched a World War I digital collection. This month we present a few images from the collection. The full collection is available at <http://ahc.digital-ar.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16790coll8>



Camp Pike base hospital, 1918



Clarence White Ferguson in 1918, father of Dr. John Ferguson, director of the AHC from 1960 to 2005.



Liberty Loan War Bond rally in Little Rock, 1918



Postcard titled "Airing Out, Camp Pike", showing beds and military gear outside the barracks, 1918.



Recruits in civilian clothes waiting in line at Camp Pike, 1918.